4/21/70

Dear Howard,

Your letter of the 15th, postmarked 17, didn't arrive until today because there was insufficient postage on it. We all do this. I have a good scale and I sometimes slip up. However, it does slow the slow mail down by that much more, in this case at least one and maybe three days. If you have a scale, check it. If you do not, when you can, get one. The Pelouze, which weights to two lbs, is dependable and inexpensive.

I was, as you by now know, quite disturbed by your memo on your Nichols interview. I had to take my wife to town this afternoon, so I responded to that immediately. I had read the rest first. Your Morgan correspondence is imaginative and excellent and you did nothing wrong. It is done by reporters and writers all the time (though I never do it). Where I feel people will not respond to me, I ask others to write, rather often. Too many people are afraid of me. On the other hand, I get responses when others cannot. One cannot generalize. Sometimes it is simply because I go after them so hard that I get responses, the same reason I sometimes do not. You know with Fisher, for example. He lost his cool, and it will return hot.

Following details as you did with Morgan is important, helps build the total picture. Incidently, that is the best procedure, to write confidential and your name. As it happens, I have no interest in this in my own writing, but is it not possible that a year from now I might forget you do not want it used and show it to someone else I trust? So, why not make that a practice, at the same time, as you sometimes have, telling me that you do not care if I use something or to ask you if it turns out I do want to, etc. But I'll tell you what about this could interest me, if you have time. Trace the sketch you sent me and sketch this in. I can visualize it better that way and it may suggest something to me. I have given you one conjecture already. You know the file I'll have this in. I'm surprised, by the way, that you did not recall the Fisher-brain thing you saw in it.

The Skolnick thing may be much worse than I've had time to spell out to you, depending on bureaucratic imagination, not often as sharp as it could be, one of the corrupting, corrosive effects of power and the predisposition to use it. I've had to spend much time trying to offset its potential. Confidentially, I have prepared a suit against him, largely to make improper use against us as close as possible to impossible. If I'd not had to write you this P.M. I'd have corrected it then. When I return from town I was still too upset to undertake such a task, so I worked outside, which steadied me a bit.

Fisher corres: send it regardless of whether or not it suggests meaning to you. Two heads are better...And I may see in it what possibly you do not, each of us having different knowledge, each seeing things differently. Your Corner letters, as you now know, had the missing link for me.

Follow the hand wound as you will. I think it foolish. I didn't give you all the possibilities. Like the family seeing it after washing, before burial.

Inability to tape Nichols: Save up. Today one can get a decent cassette recorder, quite portable, for $25, perhaps less from your dad, or through him. The cassettes are more expensive, but as you listen to it you can dub on the cheaper reels. This could have been very important to me, possible to preparation for other stupidities that can hurt us. Did you not hear him tell me he was going to sue them for what he swore they said they didn't have when there were arguing

not only that they did have it but that they always had it. Here I just cannot believe him. But if he is serious, can you imagine the end in court?

To give you a brief but I hope adequate answer to your question about my lack of doubt about the 399 business, for time always presses on me, especially when I get behind a bit further:

I had expected something like this would have to happen after what I did in 1967, but I had also forgotten about it until I saw your picture, when you saw how fast I spotted it. There are a number of reasons it had to happen, one being my knowledge of the size of the remaining [illegible]onally fragment. That is in FM. (And for what it is worth, John is the first person I showed that to and he immediately had pictures taken when he promised not to and now you tell me his picture shows it.) They have been watching me closely for a long time. They even go over what I get from other agencies and sometimes sit on that (I also sometimes blunder here, and have). They put together what I had put together and understood. In 1967, with all the attention Garrison was getting, that could have been the end. However, they never did and almost nobody did-understand the love-hate relationship between us. They could have expected me to give this to him to use. Remember also the frivolity of their refusal to take a picture for me on a scale, for their failure to give me any record of the weight at any specific, identifiable time. Well, I finally get them to take another picture for me after months and months of trying. I sent the negative to Dick, with strictest injunction not to make any extra copies, let anyone see it, etc., telling him you'd see it here. It is my first, yours and my second, all in one. I had no doubt with yours, but Dick had raised questions of angles and shadows. With the wrong exposure, I think this new one eliminates the doubts Dick had, not I.

Your paragraph on Lifton: <u>please</u> learn from this experience with John. Please learn your own limitations. And try and learn the terrible handicap an honest man is under when he deals with those who are not and are bright and resourceful and unscrupulous. I have academic interest only in the Tink-Specter tape. This is why I said not to forgo anything to get me a free copy. I think you'll get nothing of value from Lifton and I think you'll find nothing of value in the pictures he'd let you have. I'd like to be wrong. And all the copies od documents he has just gotten from CD 5 and I think 6,7, 305 are otherwise available to you. If you need any, let me know. I already have many. Not only should you not <u>discuss</u> any material,s you should not mention them in any way, not in any passing reference, not any indication of existence. You do not know him. On FBI's 59 and 60, good. I'd rather not now ask the FBI for photos without the screen. If you did not specify this, you'll get them with dots, all the Archives has. Or had two weeks ago. I have already asked the Archives to get the original, without dots for me. If they do not, I'll ask the FBI, but if I forget and have to use this in an action, can we have the understanding that because I did ask you to do it, you did it for me? I do not want to have an "admi nistrative remedy" not used, and I might get involved and overlook this. I do not expect to, but I'm also into too much now. As a general practice, every time they pull a dirty trick, I make a new, added request in writing, each time with the inherent suggestion they can look forward to another suit. This should be the next one. I've done it with the spectro (repeatedly, first time 5/66), with documents relating to Ferrie, etc.

Phone call interrupted train of thought. May I make this suggestion: you are spreading yourself too thin.Each new involvement takes time from something else. You'll not get from Lifton what the time is worth to you in other ways. You got one think that is not all that from Nichols, the Connely picture. The rest, where meaningful, is not new. Be a good shoemake, stick to your last & get the shoes done. If they need repair, you can then repair them. Best,